

STRATEGIC PLAN OVERVIEW 2026



Citizens' Climate Lobby
Citizens' Climate Education





Our Next Chapter

When I joined Citizens' Climate more than 13 years ago, I was inspired by the idea that with relentless, respectful, and nonpartisan advocacy, we could move Congress to take ambitious action on climate. That belief still drives me.

In the years since our founding in 2007, the political landscape has changed dramatically. In a more and more polarized country, it can feel harder than ever to find common ground to stand on. Too often, our individual voices on behalf of the climate seem drowned out by the din of special interest money and lobbying. And with Congress ceding more authority than ever to other branches of government, citizens' voices could diminish even further. Meanwhile, climate change continues to advance, with the impacts hitting the people and places we love.

As one volunteer said in a survey this fall, "I do my best, but I am not sure it is enough."

It's time for a new chapter of Citizens' Climate's work. One that is firmly rooted in our values, but guided by a sharper strategy. We understand that influence today isn't just about how loud we are. Instead, effective advocacy depends on building trust so we can be truly heard. That's where Citizens' Climate shines. America's political landscape needs more of our bridge-building — and the climate needs our efforts to succeed.

Citizens' Climate's leadership team and I are proud to present this overview of our 2026 strategic plan. It has been informed by volunteer focus groups and more than 1,500 volunteer survey responses. It's been shaped by months of staff working groups, supported by nonprofit consultant expertise, and approved by the Citizens' Climate Lobby and Citizens' Climate Education Boards of Directors.

This plan will better equip us to face today's challenges, and it will help us lay a foundation for even more future success. As our work continues, we will reflect on our progress and refine our tactics to make sure we're as effective as possible.

With this strategic plan in place, I hope each Citizens' Climate volunteer will know without a doubt: "I do my best, and I know it makes a difference."

With gratitude for all that you do,



Ricky Bradley

Interim Executive Director

Citizens' Climate Education | Citizens' Climate Lobby

What We Do Best

The overlap of our passion, our effectiveness, and our resources gives clarity about what we can do best. Clarity inspires discipline to stay focused on what matters most.



What we're best at

Empowering everyday people to bridge divides and build political will for effective climate solutions in Congress.

“

Great organizations aren’t scattered or reactive. **They focus on what they do best.**

— **Jim Collins,**
Researcher and consultant focused on management and organizational sustainability



Our Passion

We are passionate about training volunteers to build more support and momentum for federal climate action. Our passion is the process of empowering people as much as the goal of climate solutions.



Our Effectiveness

Citizens’ Climate has distinguished itself as the group whose volunteers create constructive, nonpartisan relationships with lawmakers. Despite growing polarization in the U.S., we remain effective at respectful, persistent relationship-building.



Our Resources

Citizens’ Climate is primarily powered by the time, energy, advocacy, financial support and agency of a broad base of volunteers.

Our Unique Role

What we do best is also what makes us unique.

In a competitive analysis, it's clear that we stand out from peer organizations in the climate space.



Bridge-Building Across Divides

We're the only climate advocacy organization training citizens to engage members of Congress respectfully, persistently, and across party lines.



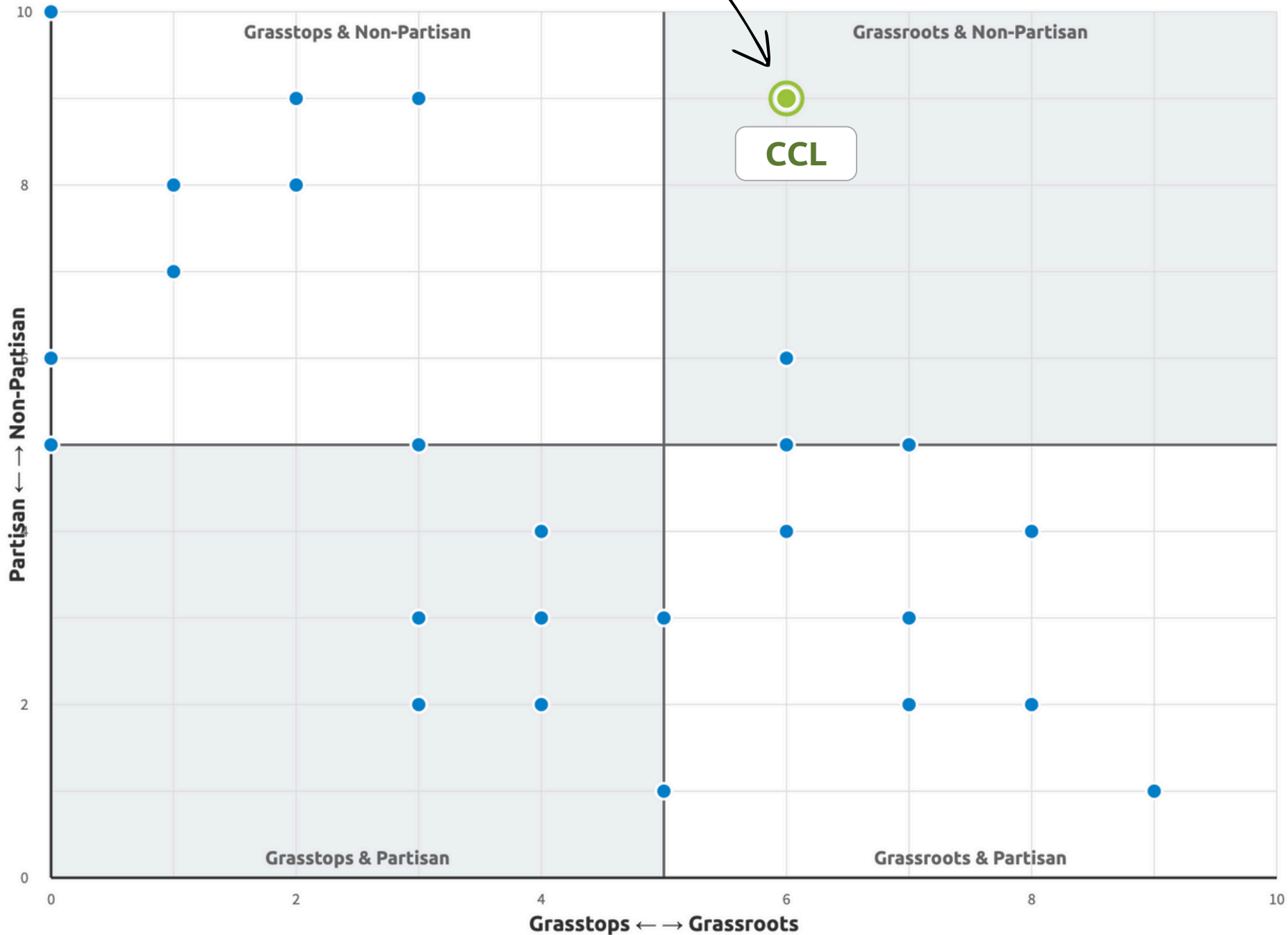
Citizen Empowerment At Scale

Citizens' Climate mobilizes everyday people to become effective advocates, reminding policymakers that we — not just corporations or professional lobbyists — have a voice.



Laser Focus on Policy Change Through Congress

With a commitment to making our voices heard in Congress, Citizens' Climate provides sustained citizen lobbying for effective, bipartisan federal legislation.



Our theory of change

To succeed at advancing climate solutions through Congress, Citizens’ Climate believes **it’s crucial for lawmakers to see climate as salient, feasible, and safe**. This is the core of our theory of change.


Without these conditions, federal climate action will likely remain a struggle. But with these conditions, Citizens’ Climate believes that lawmakers of both parties will support effective climate legislation.

“ Only **42%** of volunteers think their Member of Congress **feels politically safe** to act on climate.

Fall 2025 Citizens’ Climate survey

WHEN CLIMATE CHANGE IS

Salient


 A Member of Congress thinks:

“This matters to people — including the people I listen to most.”

Majority support isn’t enough to achieve this. Trusted messengers and local influencers are crucial.

WHEN CLIMATE ACTION IS

Feasible

 A Member of Congress thinks:

“This makes sense to do. It’s good for my area.”

With targeted, strategic messaging, the benefits of climate action become clear and relevant.

WHEN CLIMATE ACTION IS

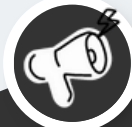




Safe

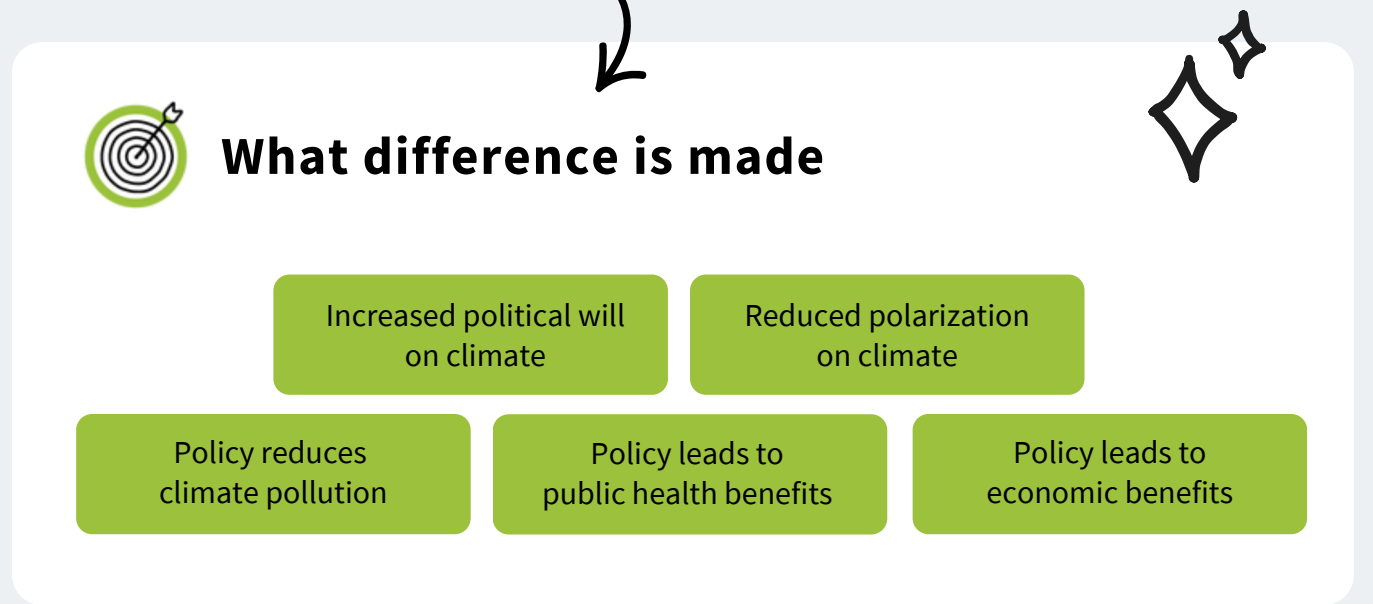
 A Member of Congress thinks:

“This won’t cost me my seat. It could even help me politically.”

Increased political will and reduced polarization around climate makes action less risky.

How it’s done

 Key activities	 Who is involved	 How they feel	 What they learn and gain	 What they do differently
Lobby	Congress and staff	Credible partners	Issue is salient, safe, feasible	Support legislation
Train, support and coach	Volunteer advocates	Agency, effective	Policy, civic, and media skills	Advocate and build bridges
Spread information	The public, the media	Better informed, encouraged	Trusted resources; quality climate info	Discuss and report on climate
Engage and activate	Trusted messengers Local influencers	Valued	That their voice reduces political risk	Speak to Congress, media and the public about climate





2026

STRATEGIC GOALS



2026 STRATEGIC GOALS

Strategic Goal 1: Mission Alignment

Citizens' Climate will cultivate a culture of alignment and shared purpose, where staff, board, volunteer leaders and volunteers are committed to our mission and empowered to innovate within a shared strategic framework.

As part of this strategic goal, you can expect these updates in early 2026:

Mission Statement

A clear and compelling statement of what Citizens' Climate is working to achieve.



Milestone: Mission statement finalized and shared by February 2026.

Policy Commitments

A unified way to understand and talk about what climate policy Citizens' Climate supports.



Milestone: Policy commitments finalized and shared by February 2026.

Partnership Framework

A guide for staff and volunteer collaboration toward our shared mission and policy goals.



Milestone: Partnership framework finalized, communicated to staff and volunteer leadership, and adopted by April 2026.

Policy Objectives

In 2026, Citizens' Climate will also outline our advocacy plans to:

- Meaningfully re-engage in the current carbon pricing policy discussion
- Advance bipartisan permitting reform to unlock America's clean energy development
- And more



2026 STRATEGIC GOALS

Strategic Goal 2: Developing Everyday People

Develop leaders and volunteers as movement builders who transcend partisanship, build trust across divides, transform social norms, and forge the relationships and alliances needed for enduring climate action.

BRIDGE Advocacy Program

A relational advocacy program based on behavioral and network science from Drs. Haidt, Willer, Cialdini; Amanda Ripley; and more.



BRIDGE → Building Relationships in Dialogue, Growth, and Engagement

The program will serve as one of the foundational building blocks for Citizens' Climate's advocacy. Initial program modules in 2026 will cover the following, with additional modules to follow:

Moral Foundations and Reframing

Understand people's underlying moral foundations, and learn to practice moral reframing across political perspectives. The program will teach participants to apply practical dialogue techniques to bridge divides and engage effectively with people holding different views.

Knowing Your Audience

Build audience profiles, map power and influence, and use attitudinal, cultural and behavioral research to identify who holds sway, what motivates them, where they are on the spectrum of support, and how to tailor approaches that foster trust and resonance.

Communicate for Connection

Build the skills to engage in persuasive, values-based conversations — drawing on motivational interviewing, persuasive communications, conflict studies and more — to foster authentic connection, trust, and change.



Benchmark: At least 70% of state coordinators and liaisons, 50% of chapter leaders and 25% of active volunteers will complete the BRIDGE Advocacy online training in 2026.



2026 STRATEGIC GOALS

Strategic Goal 2: Developing Everyday People (cont'd)

Develop leaders and volunteers as movement builders who transcend partisanship, build trust across divides, transform social norms, and forge the relationships and alliances needed for enduring climate action.

Redesign of Existing Programs

Using learnings from the BRIDGE Advocacy program, we will deepen the quality of our advocacy by evaluating and redesigning all of Citizens' Climate's existing programs, including:

Lobbying

BRIDGE will guide how we frame our approach to Members of Congress, showing up in everything from our lobby meeting materials to our longterm relationship-building efforts.

Grassroots Outreach

BRIDGE will inform refreshed Citizens' Climate presentations, tabling techniques and materials, and community connections that build trust and deeper influence.

Local Media

BRIDGE will reshape our local media resources, defining the angles we use to talk about our advocacy topics in op-eds, letters to the editor, and pitches to local journalists.

“

[Organizers] identify people who want to put their hands on the levers of change, and then develop the skills they need.

— **Dr. Hahrie Han,**
Political scientist focused on civic participation



Milestone: Redesigns complete across all Citizens' Climate programs by November 2026.



2026 STRATEGIC GOALS

Strategic Goal 3: Financial Sustainability & Growth

Build a resilient financial foundation for Citizens' Climate by securing diverse, long-term funding, growing strong reserves, and partnering closely with institutions that share our vision for effective climate action.

Strategic Goal 4: Staff Development

Continue building a high-performing, mission-driven team through ongoing training, clear growth pathways, and a culture of coaching performance.

Strategic Goal 5: Inclusive Environment

Foster an inclusive environment where staff members and volunteers feel valued, supported, and empowered to grow within Citizens' Climate.

Strategic Goal 6: Strengthen Board Capacity

Recruit leaders and committee members to Citizens' Climate's Boards of Directors who bring the necessary expertise to ensure strong governance, fundraising capacity, and strategic oversight for enduring success.

Our Values

Citizens’ Climate’s strategic plan is rooted firmly in our core organizational values.

As the strategic goals outlined above come to life in 2026 and beyond, Citizens’ Climate staff and boards will ensure that our work aligns with these values.

Focus

We are focused on solving climate change. We move Congress to pass big solutions that will ensure a healthy climate. We also work on complementary solutions that help us work together in our communities and foster a more collaborative environment in Congress.

Optimism

In the face of challenges, we choose optimism — that people are good, that democracy can work, that we can solve climate change, and that we are greater than our flaws. Optimism turns our concern about climate change into action, and it’s catching on — more and more people join us every day.

Personal Power

We use our voices to be heard in our democracy. This simple act transforms us from spectators to engaged citizens. We are volunteer-driven — trusting volunteers to make important decisions. Each of us is essential to solving climate change.

Being Nonpartisan

Our group is open to anyone who is serious about solving climate change. No matter where you live, what you wear, or who you voted for in the last election, you are welcome. We work with elected officials and community leaders from across the political spectrum because we believe that everyone is a potential ally.

Relationships

We take the most generous approach to other people as possible — appreciation, gratitude, and respect. We listen, we work to find common ground, and we endeavor to understand our own biases. We are honest and firm. We know that there is a place for protest, but our approach is to build consensus, which we believe will bring enduring change. That’s why elected officials and their staff, no matter what their politics, say they are happy to see us — and mean it.

Diversity

We empower everyone in exercising their personal and political power regardless of race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, ability, or political affiliation. We continue to bring awareness of important issues to all our volunteers and foster a sense of belonging to our organization.

Integrity

Our approach is thoughtful and thorough. We are prepared — we consult experts, use data, and solicit feedback before forming opinions or making decisions. We follow up when we are asked. We keep on going even when it’s hard. People know that they can count on us to be consistent and to do what we say we will do.



Thank you

Citizens' Climate staff and board members deeply appreciate the 1,000+ volunteers who shared their input through surveys and focus groups to help inform our path forward.

We also appreciate past insights from former CCL staff members and supporting consultants.

Citizens' Climate Staff

Ricky Bradley, Interim Executive Director
Brett Cease, Vice President of Field Operations
Olivia Melonas, Chief Financial & Operating Officer
Karina Ramirez, Vice President of People & Culture
Ashley Skoch, Chief Development Officer
Jennifer Tyler, Vice President of Government Relations
Flannery Winchester, Vice President of Marketing & Communications

Mindy Ahler	Sarah Moore
Sharon Bagatell	Dana Nuccitelli
Bill Barron	Kathy Orlinsky
Briana Belcher	Elli Sparks
Jon Clark	Elissa Tennant
Alaina Coppa	Charlotte Ward
Bryan Hermsen	Rebecca Utech
Josh Hill	Carolyn Weaver
Alison Kubicko	

CCL Governing Board

Bill Blancato
Zaurie Zimmerman
Alex Bozmoski
Jennifer Burton
Neil Chatterjee
Ross Astoria
Efaon Cobb
Natalie Orozco

CCE Governing Board

Dr. Ernest Chow
Bob Inglis, J.D.
Scott Leckman, M.D.
Dr. Lindsay Sonderhouse
Princella Talley
Dr. Sandra Kirtland Turner
Dr. Natasha DeJarnett

